

GLENS OF ANTRIM AND CARRICKFERGUS HISTORICAL SOCIETIES



**OLD CULFEIGHTRIN CHURCH**

(“Culfeightrin” means “the corner of the strangers”)

(See also entry for the Broughanlea Cross in County Antrim that reputedly originated from this site).

The remains of the Church stand about two miles South-East of Ballycastle. From the bottom of the Quay Road go along Mary Street, passing the Moyle District Council offices and tennis courts, then straight on to the Glenshesk Road. After about half a mile, turn left into Churchfield Road, and a mile and a half later on the right, turn into the driveway at the Gate Lodge of Magherintemple House. The ruin is in sight but it is necessary to seek permission to approach further from the Casement family.

The Church is significant in that it is one of the earliest buildings of County Antrim dating from c 1500 and is possibly the third Church on the site. The *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* relates that he erected in Cathrigia (Cary) the Church of Cuil Eachtrann (Culfeightrin) and he left it in charge of St. Fiachrius.

The remains of the church today consist of the east wall, a fragment of the south wall and the outline of the other walls. The east wall contains a striking window whose proportions bear such a striking resemblance to the east window in nearby Bonamargy Friary that it is claimed that they were both by the same architect. The window of fine-grained sandstone is remarkable for its delicate tracery and its transom – a feature rarely found in church windows before the fifteenth century. In the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. iv, 1898, p.179, Francis Joseph Bigger stated: “We know of few windows that surpass this one [in old Culfeightrin] in symmetry and beauty.” The internal dimensions of the church were c30.48 x 6.4m; the walls are 0.90 m thick making it much more extensive than the average Irish parish Church prior to the fifteenth century.

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